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For the past four years (2001-2005), the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children's Division, Preschool Program has sought to create Demonstration Preschool Literacy Programs for three and four year old children. The six model programs have employed an ecological/contextual approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1989), working intensely within their communities, with the children's families, and with the children to develop early literacy abilities and supports. A variety of curricular approaches, e.g., *Read, Play, and Learn* (Linder, 1999); *SPARK* (Lewman & Fowler, 2001); *Creative Curriculum* (Trister-Dodge, et al, 2002) are used in the model programs, but the following underlying beliefs serve as the foundation for all of the model programs:

1. All children can learn;
2. Families are the first and foremost teachers;
3. Strong family-school partnerships yield the highest learning outcomes;
4. Early oral and written language abilities are developed through incidental and explicit teaching, i.e., taking advantage of "teachable moments" which are both child and adult directed.

The Model Preschool Literacy programs employ both emergent literacy (Clay, 1966; Sulzby & Teale, 1991; Vukelich & Christie, 2004) and evidenced-based reading research methodologies

(Adams, 1990; Snow, Burns, & Griffith, 1998). In the emergent literacy approach to literacy development, children need to see adults using written language for real purposes. Children who observe and interact with literate adults writing and using shopping lists, recipes, or paying the bills learn the power and function of print, which is a foundation for later literacy learning. Children “try out” their beginning understanding of the function and forms of print through their earliest drawings and scribbles. In the emergent literacy perspective, the links between oral and written language development are heavily emphasized. How adults offer, support, model and respond to early literacy-related interactions (e.g., story book reading, story telling, singing songs, pretend play involving print, and real uses of print) help children to become literate from the emergent literacy perspective (Sulzby & Teale, 1991; Vukelitch & Christie, 2004; Morrow, 2005). An example of a strategy that reflects the emergent literacy perspective is “shared writing” also called the “language experience approach.” In this approach, a child “dictates” a story about his or her personal experience. An adult writes the story down while the child talks. Then the adult reads the story back to the child and then gives the child the opportunity to read it back.

The other major perspective on literacy development employed by the Model Early Childhood Literacy programs is often referred to as the **EBRR** movement. This approach focuses on specific skills such as phonological and phonemic awareness as requirements for literacy development. Phonological awareness is defined as “an awareness of sounds needed to read and spell” (Vukelitch & Christie, 2004). Phonemic awareness is defined as “the awareness of sounds in words” (ibid). Alphabet knowledge (knowing letter names and order) is also emphasized in the EBRR. Segmenting words into syllables or clapping the number of syllables in a child’s name, e.g. 2 claps for a name like, “Susie” are examples of strategies that reflect the EBRR perspective.

The classroom teachers worked with researchers to develop the “Literacy Pyramid” model to prioritize literacy development strategies used in and outside of their programs. This model is presented on page 6 of this guide and indicates the emphasis of family involvement, ongoing assessment and rich oral-language environments. Support for emergent reading and writing including guided alphabet and phonological experiences are incorporated in contextualized, play-based experiences as illustrated by the “literacy pyramid” model (Pierce, 2004).

In the current climate of “accountability”- the necessity to “prove” that children are learning, people working with young children are feeling pressured to produce “numbers” that quantify a child’s development. The NC model programs are therefore seeking to demonstrate quantifiable growth in the emergent oral and written language abilities of the young children whom they serve. We chose to measure progress using authentic assessment methodologies (NAEYC, 1990; Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001) such as portfolio development and analysis, rather than try to find, adapt, and use standardized pre- and post- measures. We feel that authentic assessment methodologies yield a more complete and valid picture of a young child’s progress and also inform practice in a much more useful fashion than does the use of standardized screening and assessment tools, e.g. PALS-Pre-K; PPVT-III; TERA.

Our Demonstration Preschool Literacy Programs are inclusive of children with a wide variety of cultural, linguistic, and ability characteristics. We are serving children with significant disabilities who cognitively may be functioning at a very early developmental level and/or who may have severe physical and sensory impairments, as well as children who are “typically” developing. Our model programs have not been able to capture the subtle developmental changes for some of our children using the developmental continuums offered by some of the curricular approaches. In our search for a way to quantify work samples, observational data, and other authentic assessment data, we discovered the Teacher Rating of Language and Literacy

(TROLL) (Dickinson, McCabe, & Sprague, 2001). Our teachers liked the simplicity of the TROLL and it has been found to be a valid, reliable rating scale of authentic assessment data. Again, however, we could not capture the subtle changes in emergent language and literacy development for the children with more significant disabilities by simply using the TROLL as is currently formatted.

Therefore, we have adapted the TROLL to form the “Bridge.” This instrument adds items taken from a portfolio guide under development by Dr. Karen Erickson at the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies (UNC-CH) and Ms. Betsy Cordle and Ms. Bonnie DiLeone from the Model Preschool Literacy program in the Wake County Public School System. Many items were taken from a rich body of early literacy research as indicated. A wider range of developmental steps in the continuum of each item’s rating scale has also been added, these steps adapted from an emergent literacy and language checklist being compiled from the literature by Dr. Vivian James and Ms. Jan Putney from the Carbarus County Public School System’s Model Early Childhood Literacy program.

We are currently in the process of validating and assessing the reliability of this measure. Items with less than 80% reliability continue to be re-worked and teacher and evaluator training is proceeding on an ongoing basis. Current inter-rater reliability for each item on the Bridge is listed on the next page. We hope that using the Bridge will yield a true and useful picture of the wonderful early oral and written language development experienced by the children in our ecologically-based, incidental and explicit teaching enriched preschool classrooms.

Preface References

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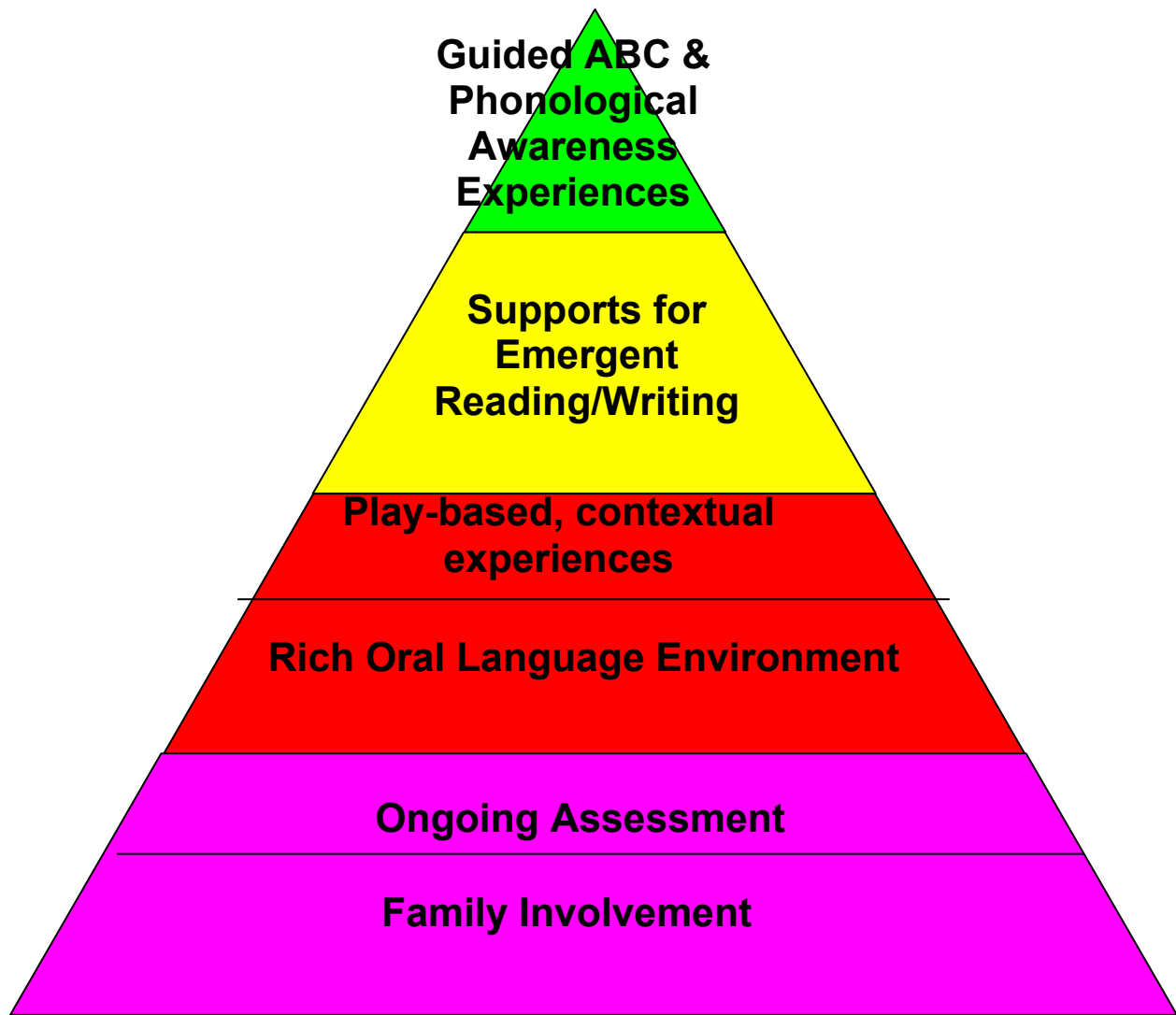
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Current (2005) Inter-rater reliability on Bridge items:

- 1=85% -7=70%
- 2=57% -8=74%
- 3=76% -9=80%
- 4=57% -10=67%
- 5=61% -11=67%
- 6=85% -the work continues!

Please note that we had 100% inter-rater reliability between the teacher and the evaluator on children with severe delays (sever delays as reported by the teacher).



The Literacy Pyramid (Pierce, 2004; adapted from Roskos, Christie, Richgels, 2003, “Essential of Early Literacy Instruction, Young Children, (58), 52-60.

Classroom instructional emphasis in North Carolina’s DPI preschool demonstration classrooms, 2001-2005.

The BRIDGE (Pierce, Summer, O'DeKirk, 2005)

(adapted from the TROLL, copyright 1997 by Education Development Center, Inc. Reprinted with permission)

All items (including writing & phonological awareness) include children's use of assistive technology (e.g., adapted books, books on disk, books on tape, communication symbols, devices). Each item is scored based on at least three (3) pieces of evidence (observation notes, work samples, pictures, dictation). Evidence may be collected throughout the school year to better inform practice. Examples for each item are included in the appendix. **ALL ITEMS MUST RECEIVE ONE SCORE.** Initial scoring of the Bridge occurs after the first six weeks of a child's entry into classroom/services. Final scoring occurs during May of each school year. Download: <http://www.governor.state.nc.us/Office/Education/Home.asp>

Foundations of Reading (Book Knowledge/Appreciation/Print Awareness/Story Comprehension)

1. How does _____ handle/interact with books?

Explores books	Browses book pages	Holds the book appropriately	Independent study of book pages	Turns pages appropriately	Recognizes book by its cover
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>

2. How does _____ interact with symbols/print?

Communicates a choice of story, song or rhyme using a picture, symbol, or object	Beginning to recognize print	Frequently recognizes print	Makes print to speech connection	Knows where to read on a page	Understands "concept of word"
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>

3. How does _____ engage in the act of reading?

Indicates awareness that someone is reading to him/her.	Displays joint attention while being read to	Points, labels, comments, acts out story characteristics during joint reading	Parallel/Solitary Reading	Reading to <u>another</u>	Reading from memory, but paying attention to the printed word
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>



4. How does _____ draw/write? (Motor item)

Exploration	Using writing/drawing tools with beginning purpose	Exploring writing/drawing with greater purpose	Writing begins to look different from drawing	Writing looks more-writing-like	Disconnected scribble with letter-like forms and some recognizable letters
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>

5. How does _____ use print? (Cognitive/linguistic item)

Uses symbols to communicate	Uses drawings to communicate meaning	Uses scribbles &/or drawings to make signs, labels, lists	Uses mainly scribbles to "write" a letter, create a message, make a list	Uses many letter-like forms in scribble to tell a story, create a message, make a list	Uses many written words (developmental & conventional spelling) to tell a story, create a message, make a list
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>

6. How does _____ write his name? (Motor & Cognitive item)

Makes an inconsistent mark/scribble to represent their name	Makes a consistent mark/scribble to write their name	Makes letter like forms in scribble to write their name	Writes some letters to form name (not necessarily in order)	Writes name in recognizable form	Writes first and last names and/or other names
1	2	3	4	5	6

7. How does _____ interact with/use letters of the alphabet?

Explores and plays with alphabet materials	Knows that letters are different from pictures and shapes	Recognizes first letter in their name (says, writes, points to)	Recognizes other letters in their own and/or other's names	Identifies specific letters in their own or other names	Identifies at least 10 letters
1	2	3	4	5	6

8. How does _____ demonstrate phonological awareness?

Participates in familiar sound and word play, songs, finger plays through visual cues & imitation	Follows rhythmic beat of language and music	Identifies/names sounds in the environment	Repeats rhythmic patterns in poems and songs	Awareness that different words begin with the same sound	Identifies some initial letter sounds and/or makes some letter-sound matches
1	2	3	4	5	6

9. How does _____ demonstrate phonemic awareness?

Recognizes sounds of language by completing familiar rhymes	Plays with sounds of language by identifying and/or <u>creating</u> rhymes	Plays with sounds of language by substituting initial sounds and/or creating alliterative pairs	Can segment a sentence into words	Can segment and blend syllables (happy)	Can segment and blend onset-rime (bug=bug; rug=rug)
1	2	3	4	5	6

10. How does _____ interact during literacy related activities?

Vocalizes during literacy activities	Looks at, points to pictures, symbols, props	Labels pictures, actions	Makes comments, relates stories to personal experiences	Asks/answers questions about the story	Retells a simple story with a /activity in sequence
1	2	3	4	5	6

11. How does _____ engage in story telling/re-telling?

Imitates actions, sound effects, words from stories	Spontaneously uses actions, sounds, words from familiar stories	Uses storybook language from familiar stories	Answers questions related to familiar stories	Predicts what might happen in unfamiliar stories	Tells an original, simple story
1	2	3	4	5	6

Other related information:

Current test scores/dates:

PPVT-R: EOWPVT: ROWPVT: PLS-3: Other:

Indicate examples of diversity in words that this child seems to know and use*:

- A. Categories of words (e.g., animals, foods) including the category label as well as individual items within a category (e.g., horse, dog, cat) _____
- B. Modifiers (e.g., hard, soft, rough, smooth): _____
- C. Mental state words (e.g., love, angry, afraid): _____
- D. Morphological endings (e.g., “s” for plural; “ed” for past tense; “’s” for possessive) _____

10 phrases/sentences language sample (based on dictation during literacy-related activities):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

@MLU ____ (based on dictation during literacy-related activities) and/or approximate number of signs/symbols spontaneously used during literacy-related activities _____

Indicate examples that reflect the diversity in sentence structure that this child seems to know and use (e.g., compound sentences, questions, comments)*:

*Hirsh-Pasek, Kochanoff, Newcombe, de Villiers, 2005 available at <http://www.srcd.org/spr.html>